16 *July;* Sri Lankan Navy fired on Indian fishermen west of Kachatheevu injuring 2 fishermen;

*29th/30th July.* Sri Lankan Navy fired upon seven Indian fishing boats off Dhanu-shkodi causing damage ot one boat and injuring some fishermen.

*14th September:* Sri Lankan Air Force helicopters fired at Indian fishing boats resulting in the death of 3 fishermen and injuries to 21 others.

*29th October:* Sri Lankan Navy fired on an Indian boat off Point Pedro, no casualties reported..

*13th November;* Sri Lankan Navy opened fire on an Indian fishing boat at Kachatheevu area resulting in death of three persons.

(c) and (d) Under the Indo-Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary Agreement of 1974, we had agreed to Sri Lanka's title to Kachatheevu island. However, in terms of Article 5 of the Agreement, "Indian fishermen and pilgrims will enjoy access to visit Kacha-Theevu as hitherto and will not be required by Sri Lanka to obtain travel documents or visas for this purpose". The Government of India have no intention to reopen this Agreement. What is needed is its effective implementation—an objective which we are constantly pursuing.

**Augmentation ship service from Madras to Europe**

708. SHRI S. MADHAVAN; Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the shippers and manufacturers in Tamil Nadu have appealed to the Shipping Corporation of India to augment the services from Madras to Europe and to resume the service to Australia suspended since May, 1990; and

(b) if so, what action has been taken on their representations?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RE SOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRl MANU BHAI KOTADIA); (a) YeS, Sir.

(b) Shipping Corporation of India Ltd., operates regular break-bulk services from Madras to U. K. /Continent. Shipping Corporation of India also offers Container Service from Madras to Europe every 17 days on the average. During January-September, 1990, 17 foreign shipping lines also offered 145 Sailings on this route, mostly feeders connecting cargo to mainline vessels at Colombo or Singapore. Thus, there are already adequate sailings available and SCI vessels have, in fact, sailed from Madras wtih unutilised space in the absence of adequate cargo. Therefore SCI feel that there is no commercial need tr7 augment the service on this sector.

SCI suspended its service to Australia for reasons of non-viability The accumulated losses of SCI during 1961-62 to i 1989-90 work out to Rs. 46. 76 crores on this service. Since SCI operates on commercial lines, it is not considered desirable to resume this service.

**Australian initiative to solve Sri Lanka Tamil problems**

709. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government are aware that the Government of Australia have taken steps to Solve the Sri Lankan Tamil prob lem through the Commonwealth Associa tion;

(b) what are the initiatives taken by that Government in this regard; and

(c) whether the Government of India was sounded on these proposals by the Australian Government?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA): fa) and (b) Government are aware that the Australian Prime Minister had written to the President of Sri Lanka proposing a Commonwealth good offices role to mediate in the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.